

MINOR GRAMMAR AND STUDY GUIDE

ENGLISH

SWEDISH

UNIVERB

English
Swedish
Minor Grammar

Univerb's language courses make it easy to take up a new language or refresh previous knowledge of a language.

Univerb's language courses work on pronunciation and build up vocabulary.

This course consists of 400 phrases and expressions in both Swedish and English and a mini grammar booklet.

In order to make the course both interesting and useful we have put emphasis on the most useful words and phrases e.g. on holiday.

With emphasis on spoken language the recorded material plays a major part. Listen to the recordings as often as possible.

Listen to the phrase and repeat slowly the first time and then at normal speed.

The best way to learn is to study little and often.

This introduction to Swedish enables you to get by with everyday basic conversation.

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About Swedish

Swedish is the most widely spoken of the Scandinavian languages, which constitute a branch of the Germanic languages, in turn a part of the Indo-European family. There are approximately 10 million speakers of Swedish. In addition to the people of Sweden, about 300,000 speakers live in Finland. Swedish is closely related to Norwegian and Danish. Historically it is closer to Danish, but the years of Swedish hegemony over Norway (1814-1905) brought the two languages closer together. A Swedish person today has more difficulty understanding Danish than Norwegian. The Swedish alphabet consists of twenty-nine letters, the regular twenty-six of the English alphabet, plus å, ä, and ö at the end. The ä and ö distinguish it from Norwegian and Danish, which use æ and ø. During the Middle Ages Swedish borrowed many words from German, while the 18th century witnessed a large infusion of words from the French. In the 19th and 20th centuries English has become by far the largest source of foreign borrowings. The English word *smorgasbord* is of Swedish origin. It is a combination of *smörgås* (sandwich) and *bord* (table).

Noun

Genders

The masculine gender, the feminine gender, the common gender and the neuter gender.

Masculine and feminine are mostly the nouns, representing persons or domestic animals. The neuter gender *it*, is divided into two Swedish genders: the common gender and the neuter gender. In learning Swedish denominations of things you had better learn, at the same time, the definite forms of the nouns, as there are no rules for the relations regarding the common and the neuter genders.

The definite form of a noun

In the Swedish language, the nouns are not preceded by a definite article as in English (the). Instead of a definite article, the endings *-en* respectively *-et* are added to the noun in the singular.

If the noun ends in a vowel, or exceptionally in the consonant *-r* or *-l*, the ending *-n* is added to the singular form of a noun in the masculine, feminine and common genders. In the neuter, the ending *-t* is added to nouns, ending in a vowel:

The masculine gender

the priest – prästen

the boy – pojken

the brother – brodern

The common gender

the chair – stolen

the motor – motorn

the fork – gaffeln

The feminine gender

the lady – damen

the girl – flickan

the mother – modern

The neuter gender

the table – bordet

the eye – ögat

the ear – örat

If you want to point out the definite form of a noun more distinctly, you put the word *den* before a masculine, feminine and common noun, which you use in its definite form:

the boy – pojken

den pojken

the girl – flickan

den flickan

the chair – stolen

den stolen

Before a neuter noun you put the word *det* in order to point it out more distinctly, and in the plural form you put the word *de* before the noun – in both cases you use the noun in its definite form:

the train – tåget

det tåget

the beds – sängarna

de sängarna

The indefinite article *en* (a and an) before masculine, feminine and common nouns, and *ett* before a noun in the neuter:

The masculine gender *The feminine gender*

a man – en man	a lady – en dam
a boy – en pojke	a girl – en flicka

The common gender *The neuter gender*

a wall – vägg	a tree – ett träd
a stone – en sten	a roof – ett tak

Formation of the plural

If the noun ends in a consonant, the endings *-ar*, *-er*, respectively *-or* are added to the singular form. If a noun ends in the vowel *a*, the *a* is to be expunged and *-or* is added.

If a noun in the common gender and in the neuter ends in the vowel *e*, the endings *-n*, respectively *-r* are often added in the neuter and *-n* in the common gender:

a horse – en häst	many horses – många hästar
a picture – en tavla	many pictures – många tavlor
a tomato – en tomat	many tomatoes – många tomater
a rose – en ros	many roses – många rosor
a promise – ett löfte	many promises – många löften
a prison – ett fängelse	many prisons – många fängelser

In some nouns, ending in an *e*, the *e* is to be expunged and the ending *-ar* is added:

sledge – kälke	many sledges – många kälkar
boy – pojke	many boys – många pojkar

Some nouns keep an unchanged plural form:

a child – ett barn	many children – många barn
a painter – en målare	many painters – många målare

To the indefinite form of a noun in the plural, the extra ending *-na* is added in order to express the definite plural form.

In the singular an the plural forms are identical in one-syllabled nouns, the ending *-en* is added:

cars – bilar	the cars – bilarna
schools – skolor	the schools – skolorna
colours – färger	the colours – färgerna
animals – djur	the animals – djuren

Irregular plural formation

man – man	men – män
tooth – tand	teeth – tänder

foot – fot	feet – fötter
mouse – mus	mice – möss
goose – gås	geese – gäss
louse – lus	lice – loss

Compound nouns

Swedish has many compound nouns. They are generally written as one word. A compound noun always takes gender of its last element:

ett huvud + en stad — en huvudstad

The genitive case

The genitive, or possessive, case of Swedish nouns is formed by the addition of *s*. The *s* can be added to any form, definite or indefinite, singular or plural, of the noun.

the girl's doll	flickans docka
the dog's tail	hundens svans
the girls' dolls	flickornas dockor
the dogs' tails	hundarnas svansar

In English you use the preposition of in order to form the genitive of concrete and abstract things, e.g.

the roof of the house	taket på huset or husets tak
the colour of the grass	färgen på gräset or gräsets färg
the inhabitants of the town	invånarna i staden or stadens invånare

Adjectives

Swedish adjectives, like Swedish nouns, have indefinite and definite forms. They also agree in gender and number with the nouns they qualify.

The adjective is placed before a noun. In the indefinite singular form the adjective is uninflected in all genders except in the neuter, where the adjective ends in *-t*:

a strong boy – en stark pojke

an old house – ett gammalt hus

In its definite form singular, an *e* is added in the masculine gender, and an *a* in the other genders and in the plural:

Maxculine gender

the strong man	den starke mannen
the strong men	de starka männen

Feminine gender

the wise girl	den kloka flickan
the wise girls	de kloka flickorna

Common gender

the straight road	den raka vägen
the straight roads	de raka vägarna

Neuter gender

the nice room	det trevliga rummet
the nice rooms	de trevliga rummen

The adjective is in most cases conjugated by the endings *-are* (in the comparative) and *-ast* (in the superlative):

kind, kinder, kindest vänlig, vänligare, vänligast

happy, happier, happiest lycklig, lyckligare, lyckligast

Adjectives, ending in *-ande* and *-ende*, and adjectives of many syllables, are conjugated by *mera* (more) and *mest* (most):

An exciting film. En spännande film.

The film was more exciting than the book. Filmen var mera spännande än boken.

It was the most exciting film I've seen. Det var den mest spännande film jag har sett.

Some irregular adjectives

bra (good) – bättre, bäst

dålig (bad) – sämre, sämst

mycket (much) – mindre, minst

liten (little) – mindre, minst

stor (great) – större, störst

Verbs

Regular Swedish verbs fall into 4 groups, called conjugations. There are also a number of irregular verbs which do not follow any particular pattern.

The Swedish verb mostly end in a vowel. There are exceptions, e.g.

hoppas – hope, minnas – remember

The most common ending of a Swedish verb is a:

komma (come), dansa (dance), skratta (laugh), tänka (think), springa (run), sova (sleep), vakna (awake), tvätta (wash), smaka (taste), resa (travel).

The Swedish verbs also end in other vowels e.g. o, å, e, y:

stå (stand), få (get), le (smile), be (ask), tro (believe), bo (live), fly (flee), sy (sew).

The sign of the infinitive – to, in Swedish – att. To be – att vara. The verbs ending in an a in the infinitive form, often end in -de in the past and in -t in the perfect.

kasta (throw) – kastade, kastat

hoppa (jump) – hoppade, hoppat

sopa (sweep) – sopade, sopat

kämpa (fight) – kämpade, kämpat

But this is no rule, as there are many other inflections:

leka (play) – lekte, lekt

finna (find) – fann, funnit

säga (say) – sade, sagt

höra (hear) – hörde, hört

möta (meet) – mötte. Mött

komma (come) – kom, kommit

The auxiliary verbs **ha** (have) and **vara** (be)

In English, the auxiliary verb *do* is used in sentences consisting of a direct question, or in sentences, where the word *not* is included. In Swedish there is no auxiliary verb in such sentences:

Do you go to school? – Går du i skolan?

No, I don't go to school. – Nej, jag går inte i skolan.

In English you say: I, you, we, they *have* but he, she, it *has*. In Swedish there is no difference in the inflection. The verb *have* is translated *har* in the present form, irrespective of person and *had* (*hade*) in the past form. *Have/has* had – *har haft*.

The same is the case with the verb *be* (*vara*) – *är* in the present and *var* in the past.

Pronouns

Personal pronouns

I	jag	me	mig
You/you	du	You/you	dig
he	han	him	honom
she	hon	her	henne
it	den,det	it	den, det
we	vi	us	oss
You/you	ni	You/you	er
they	de	them	dem

Possessive pronouns

In combination with a noun:

my	min, mitt, mina
Your/your	din, ditt, dina
his	hans, sin, sitt, sina
her	hennes, sin, sitt, sina
our	vår, vårt, våra
Your/your	er, ert, era
their	deras, sin, sitt, sina

Separated from a noun:

mine	min, mitt, mina
Yours/your	din, ditt, dina
his	hans
hers	hennes
ours	vår, vårt, våra
Yours/your	er, ert, era
theirs	deras

Demonstrative pronouns

this	denna – den här, detta – det här
that	den där, det där
these	dessa, de här
those	de där

Some prepositions

during (under)

during the autumn – under hösten

during my stay in Stockholm – under mitt besök i Stockholm

under (under)

under the bed – under sängen

under the house – under huset

for (för)

Will you do this for me? – Vill du göra detta för mig?

in (i, om, på)

in the city – i staden

in three hours – om tre timmar

in the morning – på morgonen

on (på, i)

on the roof – på taket

on the road – på vägen

but the train is on time – tåget är i tid

on Sunday – på söndag

on my birthday – på min födelsedag

at (i, på, vid, hos)

at Hellyfield – i Hellyfield

at the restaurant – på restaurangen

at the party – vid en bjudning eller på en bjudning

at my sister's – hos min syster (at her residence)

over (over)

over my head – över mitt huvud

between (mellan)

between you and me – mellan dig och mig

of (av)

The house is built of wood. – Huset är byggt av trä.

by (av, genom)

The house is built by my father. – Huset är byggt av min far.

to (till, på)

I'll go to the cinema. – Jag ska gå på bio.

I'll give it to him. – Jag ska ge det till honom.

Spelling and pronunciation

Swedish has nine vowels: *a, e, i, o, u, y, å, ä, ö*. The vowels can either be long or short, and this is indicated in spelling. Short vowels are followed by two or more consonants and long vowels by one or no consonants.

en glass – an ice cream *but* ett glas – a glass

The months of the year and days of the week are spelt without capital letters:

januari, februari, mars, april,
maj, juni, juli, augusti,
september, oktober, november, december

söndag (Sunday),
måndag (Monday),
tisdag (Tuesday),
onsdag (Wednesday),
torsdag (Thursday),
fredag (Friday),
lördag (Saturday)

Word melody

An important feature of Swedish is called word melody or pitch accent and is what gives Swedish its “sing-song” quality. Every Swedish word has of two possible pitch accents. The first pitch accent is like the pitch accent of English words and the second pitch accent has high pitch over the first syllable which is stressed. However, the second syllable gets a secondary stress and the pitch of the voice rises again before falling away to the end of the word. These pitch accents can only be learnt by imitation. Do not worry if you find it difficult to imitate the pitch accent – it will not affect other people’s comprehension of what you say.



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